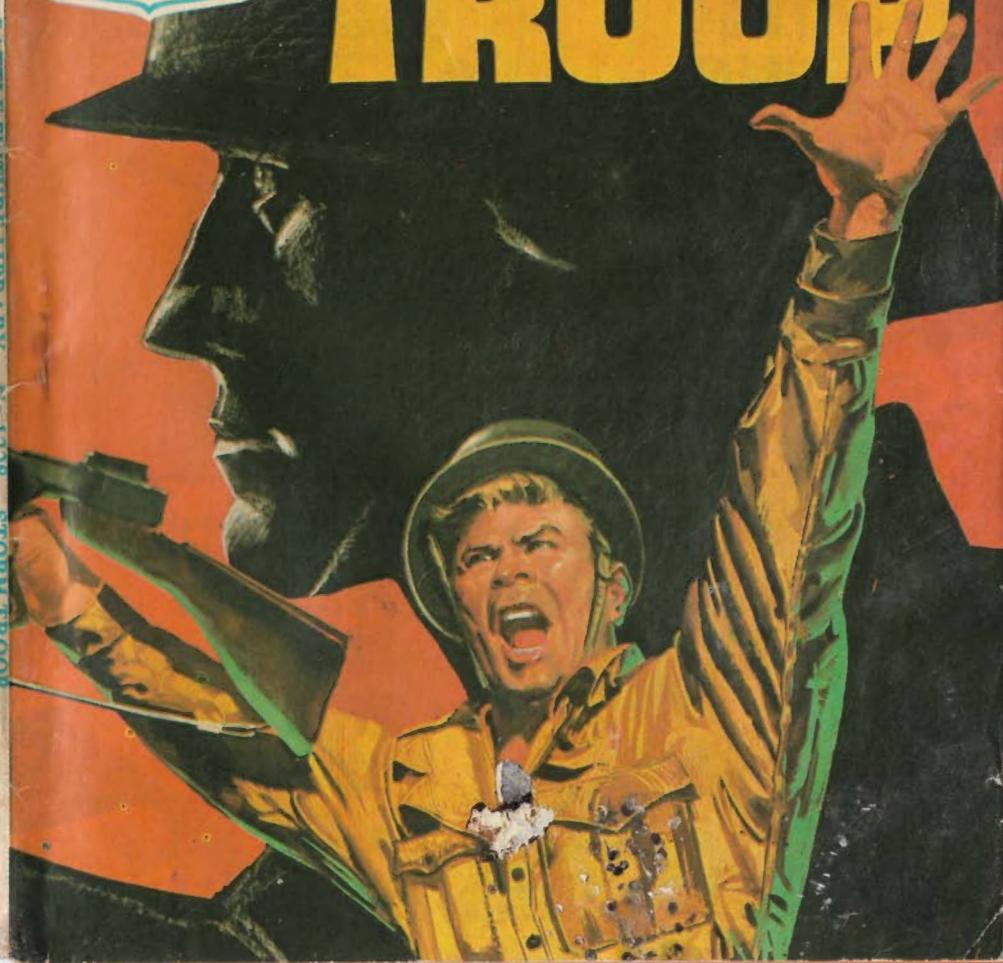


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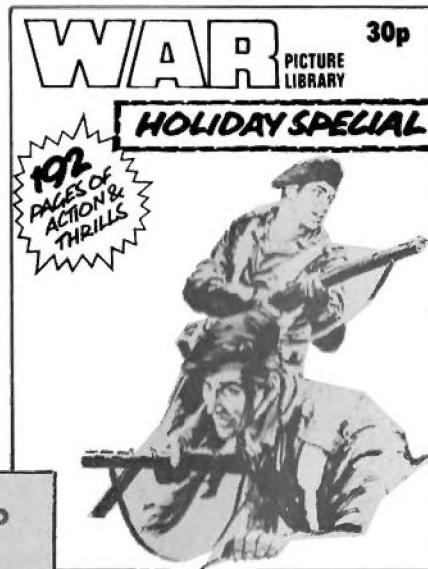
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STORM TROOP



BIG VALUE HOLIDAY READING

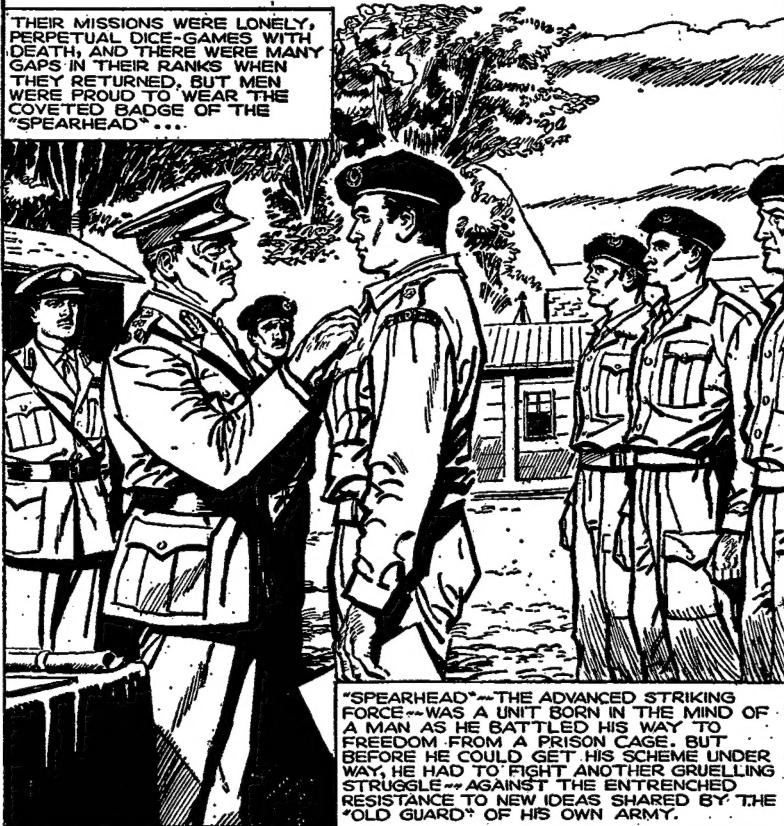
THESE
TWO
GREAT
LIBRARIES
ARE ALSO
ON SALE
NOW !



EACH WITH
192 PAGES
PACKED
WITH
DRAMATIC
BATTLE
ACTION !

STORM TROOP

THEIR MISSIONS WERE LONELY, PERPETUAL DICE-GAMES WITH DEATH, AND THERE WERE MANY GAPS IN THEIR RANKS WHEN THEY RETURNED, BUT MEN WERE PROUD TO WEAR THE COVETED BADGE OF THE "SPEARHEAD" ...



"SPEARHEAD" -- THE ADVANCED STRIKING FORCE -- WAS A UNIT BORN IN THE MIND OF A MAN AS HE BATTLED HIS WAY TO FREEDOM FROM A PRISON CAGE. BUT BEFORE HE COULD GET HIS SCHEME UNDER WAY, HE HAD TO FIGHT ANOTHER GRELING STRUGGLE -- AGAINST THE ENTRENCHED RESISTANCE TO NEW IDEAS SHARED BY THE "OLD GUARD" OF HIS OWN ARMY.

Chapter 1. Dash for Freedom

THE GUARDS OF THE PERRINA PRISONER-OF-WAR CAGE HAD GROWN CARELESS, HAVING LOUNGED AROUND TOO LONG IN THE SICILIAN SUN. WHEN THE UPROAR BEGAN IN THE MAIN COMPOUND IT CAME AS A GREAT SHOCK TO THEM ...



MAKING THEIR CIRCUIT OF THE OUTER PERIMETER OF THE CAGE, THE ITALIAN SENTRIES PASSED OVER A SMALL PATCH OF EARTH SEEMINGLY THE SAME AS ALL THE SANDY ROCK AROUND IT. BUT HARDLY HAD THE POUNDING BOOTS OF THE ITALIANS MARCHED ON THAN THE GROUND HEAVED OPEN IN THE HALF LIGHT.



NO-ONE HAD YET SUCCEEDED IN GETTING CLEAR FROM PERRINA CAMP. THERE WAS NO COVER FOR DAYLIGHT ATTEMPTS AND THE POWERFUL SEARCHLIGHTS SOON PINPOINTED THOSE WHO TRIED TO REACH THE COVER OF THE SCRUBLAND BARELY HALF A MILE AWAY, AT NIGHT.

WHY DO WE BOTHER WITH THESE MAD INGLES! LET THEM FIGHT ALL NIGHT IF THEY WANT TO!



AS THE FAKE RIOT, STAGED TO DIVERT ATTENTION FROM THEIR ESCAPE, RAGED ON, LIEUTENANT MORRELL AND SERGEANT JOCK MACDONALD LAY FLAT UNDER THE THICK PROTECTION OF A SCRUB BUSH HALF A MILE AWAY...



Storm Troop

THE TWO MEN WAITED MOTIONLESS IN THEIR HIDING PLACE UNTIL THE LAST SEARCHLIGHT BEAM HAD SNAPPED OFF INTO DARKNESS, THEN THEY SET OFF, HEADING FOR THE COAST. WHEN DAWN CAME, THEY STOOD LOOKING OUT OVER THE SEA ... THE GREATEST OBSTACLE IN THEIR JOURNEY TO FREEDOM.

WE SHOULD HAVE BEEN DOWN THERE BEFORE DAYLIGHT, JOCKY. NOW EVERY ROAD WILL BE WATCHED.

AND EVERY BOAT, TOO, SIR! WE'D BETTER FIND A WEE HIDIN' SPOT UNTIL TONIGHT!



AS THE HOT DAY PASSED, THEY LAY ON THE FRINGE OF A TOMATO FIELD, WATCHING THE SEARCH PARTIES GO PAST ON THE WHITE, DUSTY ROAD CLOSE BY ...

THIS FOOL REFUSES TO SEARCH THAT FIELD, HERR LEUTENANT! HE'S AFRAID OF SPOILING A FEW PALTRY TOMATOES!



LET THEM GO, SERGEANT! CHASING UNARMED PRISONERS IS WORK FOR ITALIANS! WE SHALL KEEP OUR ENERGY FOR FIGHTING!

THE NAZI LEUTNANT WAS IN NO HURRY. HE LITTLE REALISED THAT THE TWO MEN HE SOUGHT WERE CLOSE AT HAND... AND WOULD BE EVEN CLOSER BEFORE MANY SECONDS HAD PASSED.

LISTEN, JOCK, IT MAY BE SOME DAYS BEFORE THE HUE AND CRY EASES OFF, AND I DON'T FANCY THIS FIELD AS PERMANENT LODGINGS. I'VE AN IDEA - FOLLOW ME!



AS THE NAZI OFFICER TURNED TO ENTER THE CAR, MORRELL'S BRAWNY ARMS WERE ALREADY ROUND HIS NECK. JOCK THREW A HANDFUL OF DUST INTO THE GERMAN SERGEANT'S EYES...

UGH!



Storm Troop

THE ENGLISHMAN AND THE SCOT HAD SERVED A HARD APPRENTICESHIP IN THE DESERT WAR. THE TWO NAZIS WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR UNIFORMS, TRUSSSED AND BUNDLED INTO THE BACK OF THE CAR ...





FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS THEY LIVED THE PART OF RUTHLESS ARROGANT NAZIS. THEN MORRELL DECIDED THE TIME HAD COME TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM OF GETTING A BOAT...



Storm Troop

ONLY THE MAN IN THE WIND-CHEATER MOVED AS MORRELL SPOKE. THE REST SAT RIGID WITH FEAR AND DISTRUST.





AS THEY LEFT THE CASHIER'S OFFICE WITH THE MONEY, JOCK MACDONALD HAD A SUDDEN URGE TO RUN FOR IT. BUT THE COOL SWAGGER OF LIEUTENANT MORRELL RESTRAINED HIM.



WITH THE CASH SAFELY IN HIS HANDS GILLO, THE SICILIAN WHO HAD BEEN TO NEW YORK, GOT THINGS MOVING QUICKLY.



A PART OF THE MONEY MORRELL HAD OBTAINED HAD GONE TO MAKE SURE THAT NO QUESTIONS WERE ASKED BY ITALIAN NAVAL PATROLS. THEY WERE WELL USED TO THE NOCTURNAL ACTIVITIES OF GILLO...



MORRELL ANXIOUSLY SCANNED THE DARK HORIZON, BUT THERE WAS ONLY THE FAINTLY LUMINOUS SPARKLE OF THE WATER AS THE SHARP BOWS SLASHED INTO THE CALM SEA...



Storm Troop

SUDDENLY, MOMENTS LATER, THEY WERE BLINDED
BY A POWERFUL BEAM OF LIGHT ...



BUT THE COMMANDER OF THE BRITISH FRIGATE WHICH PICKED THEM UP WAS CONVINCED HE HAD CHANCED UPON SOME SUBTLE PIECE OF NAZI ESPIONAGE. HE SANK THE MOTOR BOAT AND SET COURSE FOR BASE WITH MORRELL AND HIS FRIENDS PRISONERS ...



IT WAS THEN THAT THE FIRST GLIMMERING IDEA OF "SPEARHEAD" BEGAN TO DAWN ON LIEUTENANT MORRELL ...



MORRELL WAS SO WRAPPED UP IN HIS THOUGHTS THAT HE DID NOT EVEN HEAR THE SCOT'S JAUNDICED REPLY.





Chapter 2. Reluctant Volunteers

LIEUTENANT MORRELL CAME BACK FROM LEAVE WITH A NEW OUTFIT AND AN ITCH TO TRY OUT HIS IDEA. BUT STRAIGHTWAY HE RAN INTO HIS FIRST OBSTACLE. THIS WAS HIS NEW CO., COLONEL WYNN-GATE, AN OFFICER OF THE OLD SCHOOL.



MORRELL FELT A TWINGE OF DISAPPOINTMENT AS HE SIZED UP THE COLONEL. BUT HE WAS IMPATIENT TO GET MOVING.



Storm Troop

THE COLONEL LISTENED IN STUNNED SILENCE FOR FIVE MINUTES. THEN HE THUMPED THE DESK HARD ... AND REPLIED ...

I HAVE NEVER HEARD SUCH SCATTERBRAINED BALDERDASH IN MY LIFE, MORRELL. WE HAVE STAFF OFFICERS -- REGULAR OFFICERS -- TO DO THE PLANNING IN THIS ARMY. CONFINE YOURSELF TO YOUR DUTIES, MAN !



IN THE BUSTLE AND PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION OF THE ISLAND OF SICILY, IT SEEMED IMPOSSIBLE THAT MORRELL'S PLAN WOULD EVER BE HEARD BY ANYONE IN REAL AUTHORITY.

WHAT A CARRY ON, IN AND OUT THE PERISHIN' WATER ALL DAY...AND WE HAVE TO POLISH ALL BRASS AND METAL EQUIPMENT. IT'S BARMY !



THE BRIGADIER WAS INSPECTING THE COLONEL'S BATTALION ... AND THE COLONEL'S OLD-FASHIONED SPIT-AND-POLISH IDEAS WERE TO BE OF GREAT HELP TO LIEUTENANT MORRELL.

AS HE PAUSED THE BRIGADIER AND THE COLONEL, MORRELL OVERHEARD A FRAGMENT OF THE CONVERSATION.

I THOUGHT WE'D LEARNED
THAT IT'S NO GOOD SENDING
MEN INTO ACTION WITH POLISHED
EQUIPMENT, COLONEL ... THEY'RE
A SITTING TARGET FOR
ENEMY SNIPERS!



FROM THE HARD GLINT IN THE BRIGADIER'S EYES, THE
COLONEL SENSED IT WOULD NOT BE WISE TO ADMIT THAT
THE "BULL" HAD BEEN LAID ON FOR HIS BENEFIT!

EARLY NEXT MORNING, MORRELL WAS WAITING FOR THE BRIGADIER. HE WAS BREAKING EVERY RULE IN THE BOOK SHORT-CIRCUITING THE CHAIN OF COMMAND, BUT HE WAS GAMBLING ON HIS JUDGMENT OF THE SENIOR OFFICER'S CHARACTER.



GOOD MORNING,
LIEUTENANT MORRELL,
ISN'T IT?

MAY I HAVE FIVE
MINUTES OF YOUR
TIME, SIR... PLEASE
HEAR ME OUT...

Storm Troop

THE BRIGADIER WAS BY NO MEANS THE TYPICAL MILITARY MIND. HE WAS AN OXFORD DON, WHO HAD PROVED HIS BRILLIANCE UNDER WAVELL IN THE DESERT DAYS. HE HEARD MORRELL'S SCHEME... AND NODDED...



THERE WAS A LIGHT OF ENTHUSIASM IN THE STAFF OFFICER'S EYE WHICH MATCHED THAT OF MORRELL.

THANK YOU, SIR! I'LL DO MY BEST IF YOU CAN GET THE OKAY, WE BUT DON'T COUNT, WON'T LET YOUR CHICKENS... YOU DOWN!

I'LL DO MY BEST TO HELP MORRELL, BUT DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS... YOU MAY FINISH UP ON YOUR COLONEL'S CHARGE SHEET YET!



IT WAS A WEEK BEFORE THE GRUDGING ASSENT OF THE GENERAL WAS GIVEN...

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, HOWARD, YOU WIN! BUT I WARN YOU, ANYTHING AMISS AND IT'S ON YOUR SHOULDERS. FURTHERMORE... YOU CAN HAVE THE JOB OF PLACATING MORRELL'S COLONEL!



BUT THE COLONEL'S INDIGNATION AT BEING BY-PASSED BY A MERE LIEUTENANT WAS NOT TO BE SMOOTHED OVER BY SOFT WORDS FROM A BRIGADIER. THE COLONEL STILL HAD FRIENDS AND HE WAS PREPARED TO USE THEM...



THE COLONEL OF THE RESERVE BATTALION KEPT HIS WORD, AS MORRELL FOUND OUT WHEN HE RETURNED FROM A VISIT TO SUPPLY HEADQUARTERS.



Storm Troop

AS SERGEANT MACDONALD INTRODUCED EACH MAN BY NAME, MORRELL FUMED AT THE TRICK THAT HAD BEEN PLAYED ON HIM.

ELLISON, SMITH
AND CORBETT,
SIR ...

EVERY MAN JACK OF THEM
LOOKS AS IF HE'S DONE SIX
MONTHS' HARD LABOUR!
THEY CERTAINLY SCRAPED
THE BOTTOM OF THE
BARREL FOR ME!



BUT THE WORST SPECIMENS WERE AT THE END OF THE LINE ...

TINY PRODGER AND TICH
WATERS, EH? TEN TO ONE
WE'LL HAVE MORE TROUBLE
WITH THOSE TWO THAN THE
REST PUT TOGETHER!



SOME OF THE MEN WERE GLAD OF A CHANGE FROM THE DULL ROUTINE OF ORDINARY ARMY LIFE AND PITCHED INTO THEIR TRAINING WITH SPIRIT. BUT SOME OF THEM WERE SHIRKERS AND PRODGER AND WATERS WERE THEIR NATURAL RINGLEADERS.

THIRTY POUNDS WEIGHT THIS IS SUPPOSED TO HOLD. WHAT HAPPENED, WATERS? DID IT EVAPORATE? LET'S SEE YOURS, PRODGER.

WE'RE VOLUNTEERS, SARGE! YOU START GIVIN' US HARD LABOUR AND YOU'LL FIND US ALL UNVOLUNTEERIN'!

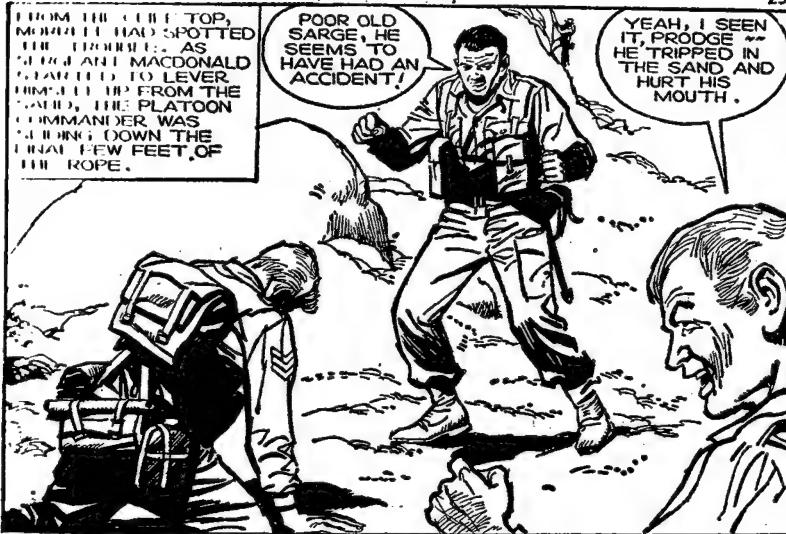
IN THE BACKGROUND, SOMEONE SNIGGERED. IT WAS FIRST BLOOD TO PRODGER ...

LATER THAT DAY, THE GROUP WAS PRACTISING ROCK-CLIMBING. ONCE AGAIN JOCK MACDONALD FOUND PRODGER AND WATERS TRYING TO DODGE THE COLUMN ...

ON YOUR FEET, YOU TWO! AND GET CRACKIN' ON THOSE ROPES!

THE GENTLEMAN'S TALKIN' TO YOU, TINY! GET UP AND SALUTE 'IM!





MORRELL FELT A COLD LOATHING FOR THE BULLYING PRIVATE.

WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, YOU'RE GOING TO STICK WITH THIS UNIT, PRODGER -- BUT FIRST OF ALL I'M GOING TO SETTLE A SCORE. FOR THE NEXT FIVE MINUTES, FORGET I'M AN OFFICER!



PRODGER LEAPED FORWARD WITH HIS MASSIVE ARMS FLAILING THE AIR. THERE WAS WILD HATRED IN HIS EYES.

STUPID LOUT! HE'S LEFT HIMSELF WIDE OPEN! IT'S LIKE HITTING A BARN DOOR!



MORRELL LUCKILY DODGED THE CRUSHING BLOWS AND IN A SPLIT SECOND THE UNGAINLY BODY OF HIS OPPONENT FLEW GROTESQUELY THROUGH THE AIR.



AS PRODGER SHAMBLED TO HIS FEET, MORRELL APPLIED A PAINFUL ARM LOCK ...

AAAAARGH!



THE HARD EDGE OF MORRELL'S HAND CHOPPED DOWN
ON A NERVE CENTRE IN PRODGER'S BEEFY ARM ...



WITH A CONTEMPTUOUS GESTURE, THE PLATOON COMMANDER PITCHED THE FERRIFIED BULLY AT THE FEET OF THE MEN WHO HAD DRIFTED AWAY, TO WITNESS THE FIGHT.



MORRELL WAS SURPRISED HOW QUICKLY THE UNIT REACTED TO THE EXAMPLE HE HAD MADE OF PRODGER. WITHIN A MATTER OF DAYS THE ATMOSPHERE WAS DIFFERENT...

I'VE GOT 'EM ON A SCROUNGING TEST FOR A DAY OR TWO, SIR! WITH WATERS TO GUIDE THEM THEY'RE DOING WELL, EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT VERY POPULAR WITH THE LOCALS!



HAVING BACKED MORRELL ALL THE WAY, THE BRIGADIER WAS JUST AS ANXIOUS AS THE JUNIOR OFFICER TO SEE THE EXPERIMENT SUCCEED.



THE BRIGADIER UNFOLDED A MAP ACROSS THE BONNET OF THE JEEP.



IT'S THREE DAYS TO ZERO HOUR FOR THE BIG ATTACK ON SICILY! I WANT YOUR UNIT TO KNOCK OUT THREE ARTILLERY BATTERIES WHICH WOULD PROVE A MENACE TO THE MAIN ASSAULT!



Chapter 3. Rough Landing

THE BLUE SIGNAL LIGHT OF THE NAVAL ESCORT GRADUALLY GREW FAINTER IN THE BLACK, HEAVING SICILIAN SEA. THE "SPEARHEAD" UNIT WAS ON ITS OWN!

WHAT A START, JOCK!
HALF AN HOUR AFLOAT IN
THIS SEA AND SOME OF
THESE BLOKES WON'T BE
IN ANY STATE TO FIGHT.

UCH! THEY'LL BE SO
GLAD TO GET ON DRY
LAND THERE'LL NOT BE
ENOUGH NAZIS IN SICILY
TO PUSH 'EM BACK ON
THE WATER AGAIN!

SURE ENOUGH THE PITCHING OF THE
SMALL BOAT WAS HAVING ITS EFFECT
ON MORRELL'S BAND ...

COR, SUFFERIN'
CATFISH! I'D HAVE GONE
OVER THE WALL IF I'D
KNOWN WHAT IT WAS
GOING TO BE LIKE!

Storm Troop

SUDDENLY, WITH A SICKENING CRUNCH, THE SMALL BOAT GROUNDED INTO A PARTIALLY-SUBMERGED ROCK. WATER BOILED INTO THE CRAFT.



IN THE ROUGH SEA IT WAS A NIGHTMARE JOURNEY TO THE SHORE. MORRELL WATCHED THE WET GROUP OF MEN AS THEY STAGGERED ASHORE. THEY WERE COLD AND DEMORALISED, THEIR WEAPONS WERE GONE, AND THEY HAD SEEN FOUR OF THEIR COMRADES DIE IN THE MERCiless, POUNDING SURF.



AS HE JOINED THE MEN AT THE CLIFF BASE, MORRELL COULD FEEL THE REBELLIOUS ATMOSPHERE.

THEY HAD NO TIME FOR DOUBTS. IS ON WHAT WE'RE WRONG? REMEMBER, WE WERE TRAINED TO FIGHT AND SURVIVE BEHIND THE ENEMY LINES ... NOW'S OUR CHANCE TO PROVE IT!



AS MORRELL BRIEFED THE MEN, SERGEANT MACDONALD SCRAPED THE GROUND THOUGHTFULLY WITH HIS BOOT. HE SUDDENLY STIFFENED AS HE STARED DOWNWARDS.

THAT'S CONCRETE!
AND THE ONLY
PEOPLE TO USE
CONCRETE ON THIS
BEACH WOULD BE
THE MILITARY!!



A SUDDEN SIXTH SENSE WARNED JOCK MACDONALD. WARILY HE RAISED HIS HEAD ...

Storm Troop

JOCK FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING STRAIGHT INTO THE PANIC-STRICKEN FEATURES OF PRIVATE GANNINO, AN UNWILLING PARTICIPANT AND ALLY IN THE AXIS CAUSE.



JOCK MACDONALD'S ARM SHOT THROUGH THE APERTURE IN THE PILL-BOX, GRABBING THE ITALIAN BY HIS COLLAR.



IN THE LIGHT OF A TORCH, PRIVATE GANNINO TREMBLED WITH FEAR AS THE DESPERATE FACES OF THE ENGLISHMEN RINGED HIM IN.



IN MINUTES LATER, PRIVATE GANNINO TURNED A SCARED FACE TO THE ENGLISHMAN WHO CROUCHED CLOSE BEHIND HIM ...





WITH THE SCHMEISSER TRAINED
ON HIM, THE TUBBY ITALIAN
DISAPPEARED INTO THE GUARD HUT...

THE EY-TIE'S STORY
WILL SOUND A BIT THIN
CONSIDERING TONIGHT'S WEATHER,
BUT I'M GAMBLING ON THE
JERRIES COMING OUTSIDE
TO MAKE SURE!



THE TWO GERMANS WERE VETERANS OF ROMMEL'S AFRIKA KORPS. THEY NO LONGER HAD ANY RESPECT FOR THEIR ALLIES.



THE GERMAN HAULLED THE FRIGHTENED ITALIAN TO THE DOORWAY AND THROWN HIM OUT. IN THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE HE COULD NOT SEE THE FACES ALL AROUND HIM.



Storm Troop

JOCK MACDONALD SENT THE FIRST NAZI GUARD THUDDING TO THE EARTH. HIS COMRADE FOUND HIMSELF LOOKING INTO A SCHMEISER MUZZLE.



IN THE SILENCE THAT FOLLOWED, THE SHAKEN ITALIAN WHISPERED THE INFORMATION THAT MORRELL NEEDED ...



MORRELL LED HIS MEN INTO THE GERMAN BARRACK HUT AND JOLTED THE GERMANS FROM THEIR SLEEP. THE MORE QUICK-WITTED OF THEM GRABBED FOR THEIR GUNS.



FIVE MINUTES LATER THE STARTLED NAZIS WERE BACK ON THEIR BEDS. BUT THIS TIME THEY WERE BOUND AND GAGGED...EXCEPT FOR ONE MAN WHO HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN CELEBRATING TOO MUCH. SWIFTLY, THE RAIDERS CHANGED INTO THE ENEMY UNIFORMS.



MORRELL EXAMINED THE GUN. THE NAZIS WERE DETERMINED THAT IF THEY WERE FORCED TO RETREAT, THE INVADING ALLIED ARMIES WOULD FIND NOTHING OF VALUE. THE GUN WAS PREPARED FOR INSTANT SELF-DESTRUCTION.



UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF MORRELL, THE TREMBLING ITALIAN SET THE FUSES FOR HALF AN HOUR AHEAD. THEY RETURNED TO THE SLEEPING QUARTERS WHERE MORRELL FOUND PRODGER RUNNING TRUE TO FORM - RIFLING THE BELONGINGS OF THE HALF-DRUNKEN GERMAN.



HOLDING A GOLD WATCH IN HIS HAND, PRODGER SPRANG BACK HURILY. HE STUMBLED AS MORRELL THREATENED HIM WITH HIS FIST.

YOU'RE TOO HANDY WITH YOUR FINGERS, PRODGER! FOR TWO PINS, I'D ...



BUT THE DRUNKEN GERMAN HAD BOMBERED UP QUICKLY ...

NEXT SECOND, THE NAZI SOLDIER WAS RACING OFF ...

STOP HIM!



FOR A FEW SECONDS, THE UNARMED MEN WERE CONFUSED IN THE BLINDNESS OF THE RUSH AT THE GLARING LIGHTS OF THE HUT.

THERE HE GOES ... TO THE GUN PIT!



Storm Troop

WITH SHOTS RICOCHETING AROUND HIM, THE GERMAN REACHED FOR THE BUTTON.



INSTEAD OF THE EXPECTED EXPLOSION, THERE WAS ONLY THE HARSH BLARE OF AN ALARM KLAXON IN THE DEADLY QUIETNESS.



WITH EVERY MAN BRISTLING WITH ARMS AND AMMUNITION, MORRELL'S FORCE RACED OUT FROM THE GUN SITE IN COMMANDERED TRUCKS TEN MINUTES BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF A HEAVILY-ARMED NAZI GROUP.

KEEP YOUR FINGERS CROSSED. WITH LUCK THEY'LL BE INSIDE THE COMPOUND WHEN THAT LITTLE LOT GOES UP!



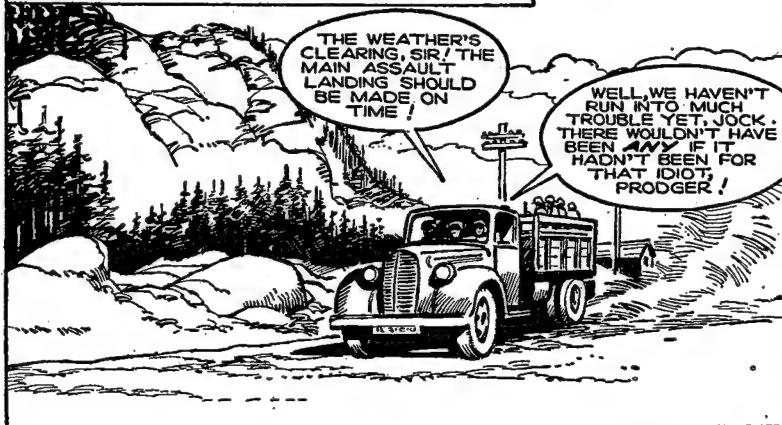
THE HUSTLE OF THE HAIL TRUCKS WAS CEASED WHILE THE GERMAN GUN FLOWED HIGH. MORRELL'S FORCE WAS HOLDING!

I'M A LITTLE SICK
THAT THE HUNT
WILL BE ON NOW,
JOCK! WE'LL NEED
MORE THAN LUCK
NEXT TIME.



Chapter 4. The Yellow Streak

WITH THE SUN RISING HIGH IN THE SKY, THEY DROVE FAST INLAND TO THEIR SECOND OBJECTIVE.



BARELY ONE KILOMETRE FROM THEIR OBJECTIVE, A NAZI SENTRY CHALLENGED THEM.



THE GLINT OF THE SUN ON THE RISING GUN BARREL GAVE THE SECOND ENTRY A SPLIT SECOND WARNING. IT WAS LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO GIVE THE ALARM.



STILL SHOUTING DOWN THE MOUTHPiece, THE NAZI WHIRLED TO MAKE HIS LAST STAND.



PAUSING ONLY LONG ENOUGH TO PATCH UP THE WOUNDED MEN, THE UNIT DROVE ON ACROSS THE VIADUCT. THEY LEFT BEHIND TWO MORE OF THEIR RANKS WHO HAD FOUGHT THEIR LAST BATTLE.



THEY PUSHED THE TRUCK OVER THE PRECIPITOUS SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN TRACK. IT BOUNCED THREE TIMES BEFORE DISAPPEARING WITH A ROAR INTO THE DARK DEPTHS OF THE GORGE.



STRETCHED FLAT ON THE DUSTY ROCK, MORRELL EXAMINED THE GUN SITE BELOW HIM.



UNFRIENDLY EYES WATCHED THEM AS THEY MARCHED ALONG THE PEBBLED ROAD THAT WOUND TO THE FIRST DEFENCE POST.



THE SENTRY WAS PUZZLED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE UNIT. HE HAD NO ORDERS TO ADMIT SUCH A GROUP, BUT HE RAISED THE BARRIER TO LET THEM IN. THE COLUMN MARCHED ON INTO THE CAMP ... AND THE SENTRY RECEIVED AN UNPLEASANT SHOCK ...



Storm Troop

THE UNCONSCIOUS SENTRY WAS PUSHED INTO THE SCRUB AS THE COLUMN MARCHED ON UNFALTERINGLY TOWARDS THE FINAL GUARD POST.



THE SENTRY'S REACTIONS WERE FAST ~ BUT NOT AS FAST AS MORRELL'S! AS THE SENTRY SIGHTED HIS RIFLE, MORRELL FIRED ...



BUT THE BURST OF FIRE HAD RAISED THE ALARM.
THE DUTY OFFICER HURRIEDLY ORDERED HIS
MEN TO ATTACK.

ACHTUNG!
ENEMY ACTION!
GUARD ALL EXITS!
THEY MUST BE
KILLED!



THE SPEARHEAD RAIDERS WOULD OVERWHELM THE REWILDED DEFENSIVE
IN THE COUNTRY, AND TURNED TO REAR TRACK THE ADVANCED RAIDERS.

ALL THE EXPLOSIVE
CHARGES AREN'T READY,
JOCK! YOU'LL HAVE TO
HOLD THE JERRIES OFF
FOR TEN MINUTES!



WORKING FAST, MORRELL HAD THE EXPLOSIVES PREPARED IN HALF THE TIME. BUT BY THEN THE NAZIS, WHO HALF SURROUNDED THEM, WERE CLOSING IN TIGHTLY...



THE SPEARHEAD MEN WERE WELL ON THEIR WAY WHEN A SHOUT FROM SERGEANT MACDONALD BROUGHT MORRELL TO A HALT ...



SERGEANT MACDONALD SENT A BURST OF HOT LEAD WHINING AT THE NAZIS, WHILE MORRELL LIFTED PRODGER TO A SITTING POSITION.

PRODGER'S NOT BEEN HIT, JOCK... HE'S JUST SCARED STIFF. WE SHOULDN'T HAVE RISKED OUR NECKS.



QUIVERING WITH FEAR, THE CLUMSY PRIVATE WAS DRIVEN FIERCELY TOWARDS THE CLIFF FACE BY SERGEANT MACDONALD.

GET GOING, YOU GREAT LUMP OF JELLY!

STEP UP YOUR COVER FIRE, LADS, OR THEY'LL NEVER MAKE IT!



TWO SECODNS LATER, THE CHATTER OF THE AUTOMATIC WAS LOST IN THE ROAR OF THE EXPLOSION AS THE GUNS WREW SKY HIGH.

THE JERK'S MIGHT HAVE TAKEN THE FULL BLAST OF THAT! WE SHOULD GET CLEAR BEFORE THEY GET OVER IT.



Storm Troop



Chapter 5. Overture to Invasion

MORRELL SENT OUT PATROLS. THEIR INFORMATION WAS DISTURBING ...



Storm Troop

THE COMMANDER OF "SPEARHEAD" WAS NOT ALONE WITH HIS PROBLEMS. NOT A MILE AWAY, HIS NAZI COUNTERPART HAD MORRELL IN MIND.



AN EXCITED LEUTNANT BURST THROUGH THE DOORWAY.



IT WAS ALL TOO EASY, ALL TOO QUIET. MORRELL BEGAN TO FEEL UNEASY.

HALF AN HOUR AGO THE PLACE SWARMED WITH GUARDS. NOW THERE ISN'T A MAN TO BE SEEN! IS IT A TRAP?



AS THE LAST GERMAN-UNIFORMED COMMANDO PASSED BENEATH HIM, A NAZI SIGNALLER WAS QUIETLY MURMURING INTO HIS TRANSMITTER ...

ENEMY STORM TROOP HAS JUST PASSED... HEADING SOUTH-WEST!



THE INFORMATION HE RECEIVED SEEMED TO SURPRISE THE COLONEL...



MORRELL'S TAUT NERVES JUMPED WHEN A GUTTURAL VOICE SHOUTED FROM THE BLACKNESS OF THE NIGHT.



TWO SUB-MACHINE GUNS OF THE GRENADIER GROUP BLAZED INTO THE DARKNESS, BUT THE WELL-DISCIPLINED NAZI RANKS LET THE BURST GO OVER THEIR HEADS...



TO EMPHASISE THEIR WARNING, THE NAZIS FIRED A BURST FROM EACH LINK IN THEIR CIRCLING FORCES ...



Storm Troop

FOR A LONG HOUR, THE GRIM BATTLE OF WITS CONTINUED. MORRELL PROBED AT EVERY CORNER, BUT ALWAYS WITHDREW AFTER FINDING THE STRENGTH OF THE ENEMY. THE GERMAN COLONEL STILL BELIEVED IN CAUTION...



MORRELL HAD ALREADY SEEN THROUGH THE NAZI COMMANDER'S REASONING...



MORRELL TOLD HIS MEN THE POSITION, AND SERGEANT MACDONALD OFFERED HIS SUGGESTION...



THE DESPERATE ONRUSH OF THE FEW MEN WAS FIERCE ENOUGH TO COMPEL THE NAZIS TO HIT BACK IN SHEER DEFENCE.



Storm Troop

BUT THE OTHER NAZI CREWS DID NOT GIVE THEM TIME TO EXPLOIT THEIR BRIEF VICTORY. TWO MORE SPEARHEAD MEN DIED UNDER THE WITHERING CROSSFIRE ...



IN THE NOISE AND CONFUSION, MORRELL HAD TO SHAKE THE TRUTH OUT OF WATERS ...



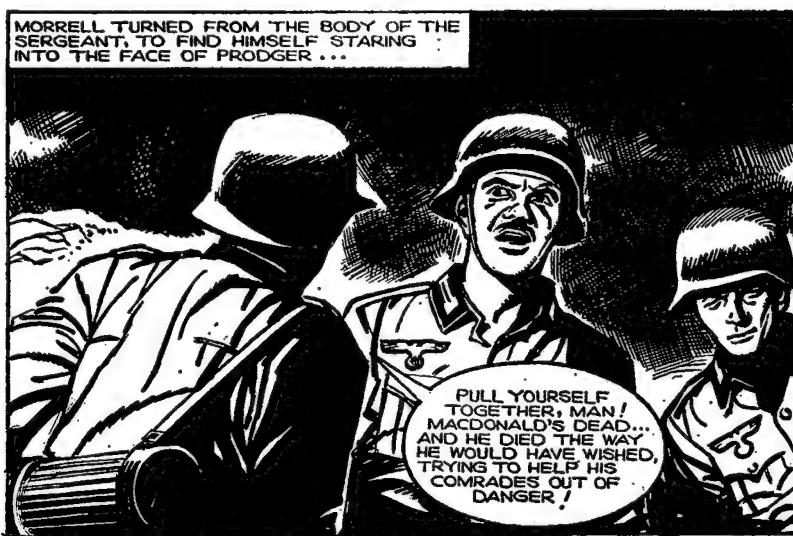
THE ANGRY TIDE MORRELL FLEES. HE IS KILLED
WATER, PAULIE HEELED MORRELL TO
WHERE THE AIRCRAFT WAS LYING.

WE'RE TOO
LATE HE'S DEAD,
BUT HE WAS A
BRAVE MAN - THE
BRAVEST I EVER
KNEW!



MORRELL TURNED FROM THE BODY OF THE
SERGEANT, TO FIND HIMSELF STARING
INTO THE FACE OF PRODGER ...

PULL YOURSELF
TOGETHER, MAN!
MACDONALD'S DEAD...
AND HE DIED THE WAY
HE WOULD HAVE WISHED,
TRYING TO HELP HIS
COMRADES OUT OF
DANGER!



Storm Troop

BUT PRODGER HAD REACHED THE END OF HIS ENDURANCE.
HE COULD NO LONGER CONTROL HIS FEAR...



CRAZED WITH FEAR, HE RUSHED ON. GERMAN
BULLETS SMASHED HOME, BUT NOTHING
SEEMED TO STOP HIS FRENZIED RUSH.

HE IS MAD!
HE IS HEADING
STRAIGHT FOR
THE MINEFIELD!





SOME MILES AWAY ACROSS THE SEA, THOSE ON THE LANDING SHIP OF THE INVASION FLEET WATCHED THE CHAIN OF EXPLOSIVES LIGHTEN THE HOSTILE COAST



Storm Troop

MORRELL STARED TRANSFIXED AT THE RESULT OF THE MINEFIELD EXPLOSIONS. THE NAZIS HAD MINED THE APPROACHES ONLY TOO WELL. THE GUNS HAD BEEN BLOWN TO TWISTED SCRAP-METAL ...



SOON THE SEA WAS CHURNED BY BARGES AND LANDING CRAFT. BEHIND THEM, A DEMORALISED, SHAKEN ENEMY RETREATED TO THEIR INLAND DEFENCES ...

THEY MUST BE THE SPEARHEAD BOYS WE WERE TOLD TO LOOK OUT FOR. POOR BLOKES! THEY LOOK AS IF THEY'VE HAD A ROUGH PASSAGE!



THE BRIGADE MET THEM AS THEY CLIMBED ABOARD THE DESTROYER.

YOU'VE DONE A LITTLE JOB, LIEUTENANT. YOUR 24TH ARTHILL UNIT WAS A DIVISIONAL FORCE. YOU WON'T MEET ANY OPPOSITION IN THE FUTURE. TO YOUR IDEA!

THANK YOU, SIR! WE LEARNED A LOT IN THOSE FEW HOURS...



THAT NIGHT, AS THE TUMULT OF THE BATTLE CONTINUED, PRIVATE WATERS APPROACHED MORRELL.

ABOUT SERGEANT MACDONALD, SIR... I'M SORRY ABOUT HIM! HE WAS A GOOD BLOKE!

THANK YOU, WATERS. I'M SORRY ABOUT THEM ALL... EVEN PRODGER!



Storm Troop



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